



Autism Spectrum Disorder Class (ASD) Admissions Policy

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

This policy must be read in conjunction with and is part of the overall Student Admissions Policy for Trinity Comprehensive School.

The Autism Special class is funded and resourced by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The Board of Management of the school has the responsibility for the ongoing management of the ASD Special Class, having regard to the funding, resources, services and space available.

'Special Class' means a class that has, with the approval of the Minister of Education and Skills, been established by a school to provide an education exclusively for Students with a category or categories of special educational needs specified by the Minister of Education and Skills. Trinity Comprehensive School has one Special Class, established to cater for the special educational needs of students with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

Trinity Comprehensive School ASD Special Class, established to cater for the special educational needs of Students with Autism. Only applications in respect of Students whose needs fall within the category of special educational needs provided for by the Special Class will be considered.

Parents/Guardians should note that the allocation of a place in the ASD Special class does not guarantee a place in the mainstream post-primary classes for any siblings.

External Support Services

Essential services are provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE). These services include all relevant supports such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy. The Board of Management at Trinity comprehensive School has no function in accessing these services, but merely acts as a relevant conduit for their provision, where available and possible.

Pre enrolment

All applicants must have an assessed primary diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The

assessment must be in line with the established DES criteria of DSM-V and ICD 11 All applications must be accompanied by an assessment, carried out by an Educational/Clinical Psychologist approved by the DES, recommending the student to attend an ASD special class.

Only students with a diagnosis of a qualifying Autism Spectrum Disorder without moderate or severe significant intellectual impairment will be considered.

A prospective student for the ASD Special Class must have a professional recommendation, from a NEPS Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or from a multidisciplinary team (Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Physiotherapist), for placement in an autism specific class. All applications in operation on a child should be provided to the school for assessment by the Admissions Team/Board of Management. The withholding of such reports from the Board of Management may invalidate an enrolment application at any time.

Parents/Guardians should note that under the official DES guidelines, the number of student places available in the ASD Special Class in Trinity Comprehensive School is six students for the school academic year and thereafter. It should be noted that fulfilling the enrollment criteria does not necessarily guarantee the student a place in the ASD Special Class.

The Board of Management requires that Parents/Guardians must accept that the enrolment process only proceeds where the educational and physical needs of the applicants as identified can be met within the ASD Special Class.

The Parents/Guardians of the applicant must accept and agree to Trinity Comprehensive School's Code of Behaviour and the terms of this policy

The ASD Special Class in Trinity Comprehensive School will only enrol children that are 12 years or more, and less than 18 years of age, on the 1st of September of the school year in question for enrolment.

Enrolment

Trinity Comprehensive School's ASD Special Class will give initial priority to applications from students already enrolled in Trinity Comprehensive School who received their ASD diagnosis after enrolment and require such support.

Applications to enrol a student in the ASD Class will only be considered in the year of entry of the applicant to Trinity Comprehensive School.

Priority will be given to the applicant's resident within the defined school Catchment Area.

Students who apply must have an ability to meaningfully participate in mainstream classes in order to be considered for enrolment in Trinity Comprehensive School ASD Special Class.

In making its decision, the Trinity Comprehensive School's Board of Management will have regard for relevant Department of Education and Skills guidelines in relation to special class size and staffing provisions and/or any other relevant requirements concerning accommodation, including physical space and the health and welfare of existing and prospective students.

All applications for enrolment in the ASD Special Class will be considered within the context of the school's Admission Policy.

Application Process

A separate ASD Special Class Enrolment Application Form, a copy of which is available from the school, should be fully completed and submitted by the parent/guardian on behalf of the applicant. The closing date for receipt of such completed applications by the school is September 30th of the previous year of entry. Parents/Guardians should note that the application process for placements in the ASD Special Class and the closing date for receipt of completed applications for the ASD Special Class in the school is different, to that for student applications for enrolment in mainstream classes.

Trinity Comprehensive School requires that all applications are accompanied by documentary evidence that proves conclusively that the applicant has been diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder by an approved specialist / team of specialists in the fields of educational psychology / clinical psychology / child psychiatry / paediatrics. Parents/guardians of applicant pupils need to provide the School with a full, written, original diagnostic history. Psychological reports / Occupational Therapy reports / Speech and Language Therapy reports, or any other reports, which refer to the original diagnosis, will not be accepted in lieu of the original written diagnosis.

Trinity Comprehensive School must be provided with a School Transition Report completed by a psychologist in conjunction with primary school staff and parents/guardians. If no psychologist is available to complete the School Transition Report, then it should be completed by the most appropriate member of staff at the student's primary school.

The most recent psychological/cognitive/multi-disciplinary etc. assessment, if within a reasonable timeframe (previous 2 years), or recent (within the past 2 years) Statement of Need from qualified professional should recommend that a student needs a placement in an ASD Special Class in a mainstream post-primary setting.

Trinity Comprehensive School requires that the parents/guardians of the applicant pupil, agree to facilitate a selected member/members of the ASD Special Class team in conducting as many observations as appropriate of the pupil in their current educational placement. Parents/Guardians will be made fully aware of the date, time and nature of the visit.

Parents/Guardians must make available to Trinity Comprehensive School's ASD special class staff copies of the applicant student's work, their most recent ISP/IEP and any other relevant information, if requested.

This Enrolment Application Form should be accompanied by an original Birth Certificate of the

applicant and accompanied by all the up to date and pertinent educational psychological assessments(s) and diagnostic report (s). The Enrolment Application form must also be accompanied by School Reports and relative documented information from all previous schools that the applicant attended.

There must be signed consent from the Parents/Guardians granting the Board of Management of the Trinity Comprehensive School permission to access and share any other reports relative to the application

Only applications that then meet the criteria for enrolment, subject to available space and maximum student numbers, will be considered.

The advice, support and recommendation of the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) for the area/region, based on the needs of the applicants, will be considered in the decision making process associated with enrolment of applicants in the ASD Special Class at Trinity Comprehensive School.

It is important that Parents/Guardians note that Trinity Comprehensive School may in certain clarified circumstances and following an assessment and investigation, be unable to meet the special educational or physical needs of the applicant on the grounds that

- (I) the applicant is deemed a risk, on health, safety, welfare or security grounds to themselves and/or other, or
- (II) (ii) admission of the applicant will make impossible, or have a serious detrimental effect on, the education provision by Trinity Comprehensive school as an educational establishment of its services to other.

All recommendations will then be considered by the Board of Management of the Trinity Comprehensive School who make the final school decisions on all applications to enrol.

Late Applications

An application received by Trinity Comprehensive School after the closing date published by Trinity Comprehensive School and set out in the Admission Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admission Policy.

Acceptance of a place

If the Student in respect of whom the application is made is offered a place, the Applicant will be issued with an Acceptance Form by the school.

The Applicant shall indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer. This includes indicating

whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school.

Failure to fully complete and return the Acceptance Form to the school by the date set out in the School Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the school if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for refusal as set out below.

Refusal

Where a Student in respect of whom an application is being sought has not been offered a school place, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- 7.1.7.1 The reasons that the Student was not offered a place in Trinity Comprehensive School ASD Special Class.
- 7.1.7.2 Details of the Student's ranking against the published selection criteria,
- 7.1.7.3 Details of the Student's place on the waiting list, if applicable, and
- 7.1.7.4 Details of the Applicant's right to appeal the decision

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

- 7.1.7.5 The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect, or
- 7.1.7.6 The Applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the 2022/2023 academic year, or in the case of a late application, or second/third-round offer, within 2 weeks, or
- 7.1.7.7 An Applicant has not indicated:
 - (i) whether or not s/he has applied for and is awaiting confirmation of an offer from another school(s) and if so, the details of the school(s);
and
 - (ii) whether or not s/he has accepted an offer of admission from another school(s) and if so, the details of the offer(s).

Oversubscription

Where the number of applicants on the applications file exceeds the number of places available, the following ranked criteria will then apply to all applications received:

1. Applicants that are already enrolled in Trinity Comprehensive School who received their ASD diagnosis after enrolment and require such support.
2. Applicants attending the feeder schools named above
3. Applicants with siblings already enrolled in the Trinity Comprehensive School
4. Applicants residing in the catchment area
5. Applicants not attending the above named feeder schools for whom this ASD Special Class would be the nearest facility to their home residence.

Parents/Guardians should note that where the number of applicants at any stage of the criteria numbered above exceeds the number of spaces available within that criterion, then the date of birth of the applicant will be considered with priority being given to the oldest applicant within that criteria level, and continuing thus forth until all places are filled. If two or more applicants share the same date of birth, then places will be allocated on the basis of the date that fully completed Student Application Forms were recorded (date wise) in the applications file.

Parents/Guardians should note;

a) The Parents/Guardians of a child being offered a place in the ASD Special Class will be invited to visit the school to meet with a member of the Special Education Team and the Principal/Deputy Principal of the school, to discuss the placement/enrolment of their child. Any information requested by the Parent/Guardian will be provided at this meeting.

b) The Parents/Guardians may be requested to consent to a visit by a member of the Special Educational Needs professional staff at the Trinity Comprehensive School, to visit the existing school placement of the student concerned in order to observe the student in a classroom situation.

c) The Parents/ Guardians will be invited to accompany their child to visit the Trinity Comprehensive ASD Special Class and meet staff.

d) The Parents/ Guardians are also invited, after the acceptance and placement of their child in the ASD Special Class, to be consulted about the Education Plan for their child.

e) The NEPS psychologist and SENO will be appraised of the Education Plan

f) A student may be phased gradually into the special class in the ASD Special Class through a mutually agreed process between Parents/Guardians and the Management of the school.

g) Where it is deemed appropriate, a student in the ASD Special Class will be assigned to an age appropriate mainstream class for integration purposes by school management.

Students that are currently enrolled in an ASD Special Class in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer enrolment to Trinity Comprehensive School ASD Special Class during the course of the school academic year

Students enrolled in an ASD Special Class in another post-primary school will not be considered for transfer enrolment to Trinity Comprehensive School ASD Special Class at the end of a school

academic year unless the family have moved residence into the catchment area of Trinity Comprehensive School.

Parents/Guardians must note the Trinity Comprehensive School respects the rights of the existing school community and the students already enrolled therein, and this consideration is paramount when assessing entry to the ASD Special Class.

The placement of every student within an ASD Special Class will be subject to regular review by the school staff and where appropriate the professional services external to the school, following which decisions will (i) continue within the ASD Special Class at Trinity Comprehensive School (ii) integrate fully into the mainstream post-primary, or (iii) seek an alternative and more appropriate educational placement for the student as Trinity Comprehensive School is unable to meet the educational needs of the student. In such an instance the support and assistance of the staff at Trinity Comprehensive School will be available to assist the family in securing a more suitable learning environment in another educational institution, for the student concerned.

Behaviour

As already indicated above the Parents/Guardians of the applicant for enrolment must accept and agree to Trinity Comprehensive School's Code of Behaviour/Discipline and the terms of this policy.

The Board of Management of Trinity Comprehensive School reserves the right of admission and to refuse to enrol a student, within the terms of this policy. Parents/Guardians of applicants who are refused admission to Trinity Comprehensive School ASD Special Class will be advised of their right to appeal the matter to the Secretary General, DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

The Board of Management will not, however, refuse to enrol a student on the basis of;

1. Ethnicity,
2. Disability
3. Traveller status,
4. Gender
5. Political beliefs,
6. Family or Social Status.

This policy is subject to periodic review by the Board of Management of Trinity Comprehensive.

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 4/10/22